

March 28, 1977

by London (OSA 13114; six sides). The forces involved are the National Philharmonic Orchestra and the London Opera Chorus, conducted by Peter Maag, with Montserrat Caballé, Sherrill Milnes, Bonaldo Giaiotti, Luciano Pavarotti, Richard Van Allan, Anna Reynolds, and others, and they all give superb performances. "Luisa Miller" is a hearty, melodious opera, but its plot, based on Schiller's "Kabale und Liebe," is slightly ineffective.

**FINALLY**, a new recording of Massenet's "Thaïs" presents Beverly Sills in the title role, Sherrill Milnes and Nicolai Gedda in the other principal parts, the New Philharmonia Orchestra, and the John Alldis Choir, Lorin Maazel conducting (Angel SCLX-3832; six sides). This recording invites comparison with another recent "Thaïs," in which Anna Moffo sings the leading role (RCA ARL3-0842; six sides). Those who would sacrifice everything to beautiful singing tone will prefer the Moffo version, but Miss Sills is one of our greatest singing actresses, and her command of the dramatic inflections of the voice makes her "Thaïs" the better one, in my opinion. She is highly expressive in this recording, and Milnes is superb. Just one caveat: Mr. Maazel should stick to conducting. His performance of the famous violin solo the "Méditation," which he has undertaken in addition to his job as maestro, has a patch of poor intonation.

—WINTHROP SARGEANT

### THE BLIND GIRL

When I was ten God sent  
two arrows, meant  
for my eyes. Two arrows,  
two capsules of snow  
that shattered, so the bandage  
froze to my face.  
When they took it off  
I was blind. Nurse,  
how strange the darkness is,  
not black at all but the passive  
color of absence, as though one  
afternoon  
an image came—of autumn, of a  
garden  
where all color had converged to fade—  
and faded and was not replaced.  
I listened:  
I heard voices, I heard my own voice  
rising from the still  
transparent body of an angel  
as calmly as the wind lifts the edges  
of the curtains, letting in  
the measured light.

—LOUISE GLÜCK

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